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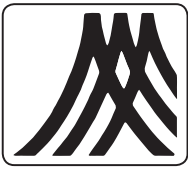


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An Industry Trade Publication | February 2017

For Local Information Contact:
themetropolitanbuilder@yahoo.com
832-317-4505
www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

5161 San Felipe St. #320
Houston, Texas 77056
832-317-4505

Owner/Publisher
Giselle Bernard

Editor
Kathy Stolz

Magazine Layout & Design
Graham W. Goodyear, AIA

Website
www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

Printed in the USA
Bayside Printing Company, Inc.
160 Lockhaven Dr,
Houston, TX 77073
281-209-9500

The Metropolitan Builder is a local trade publication published monthly in an informative and positive manner. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to building professionals throughout the greater Houston area. The opinions and facts expressed in The Metropolitan Builder magazine are those of the authors or columnist and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, nor do they constitute an endorsement of products or services herein. The Metropolitan Builder strives to ensure the accuracy of the magazine's contents. However, should inaccuracies or omissions occur, we do not assume responsibility. The Metropolitan Builder reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. This publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without the expressed prior written permission of the publisher.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

In last month's Publisher's Note, I stated that hard copies of the magazines were going to be mailed to all of the builders that could be identified in the market as well as the interior designers who are members of the ASID. Advertising vendors will also receive hard copies of the magazine.

In addition, suppliers and subcontractors, despite not being the primary market of the magazine's content, will receive a link to each month's digital issue within a newsletter that I send out monthly. If you are not receiving the digital magazine and would like to, please send me your email address, and I'll include you in the distribution list.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I hope you enjoy this and every month's issue.

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Reinhardt Homes Build, Deliver Quality Homes

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Few builders know better than Trent Elliott, owner of Reinhardt Homes, what it takes to build a good quality home, whether it's the electrical, mechanical or structural elements of the home.

You see, Trent was licensed through the Texas Real Estate Commission as a residential home inspector and was also certified in the International Residential Code through the International Code Council. As a licensed inspector, he personally conducted thousands of inspections, checking other builders' work for 15 years as the owner of In-Depth Home Inspection while he was also building homes.

But, because he's so busy building custom homes in Conroe, Montgomery and surrounding Montgomery County, Elliott no longer inspects others' work. However, he includes three independent inspections at

the foundation, framing and final stage of every house, allowing his houses to qualify for a 10-year warranty through StrucSure Home Warranty. "I know the inner workings of building. A lot of builders don't know the codes," he pointed out.

He said he encourages the inspectors to find anything they can wrong with one of his houses so that he can ensure the homebuyers they have a top-quality home. Elliott said Montgomery County does not require inspections for homes built outside of city limits, but he's had every house he's ever built inspected. The company motto for Reinhardt Homes is "building and delivering a high quality home with superb customer service."

"We believe in doing what's right because we've got to live where we work, where I grew up. We rely on word-

of-mouth referrals. Not only are the aesthetics of a home important, but we focus on everything behind the walls that people can't see. We try to do a good, quality job. We have integrity," Trent said. "Almost everything we do relies on word-of-mouth referrals. In essence, we are a good, family company that is based on customer service."

Family is important to Elliott. He named the homebuilding division of his company Reinhardt Homes to honor his grandfather, Paul Reinhardt Stichler, who was a hardworking man of great integrity, he said.

His wife Shannon is his partner in the parent company of Trent Elliott Homes, Inc., handling the scheduling and bookkeeping for the company since they started in 1996. They have three children who are active in sports, including travel teams for volleyball, basketball and baseball, which demand much of their focus during their non-working hours.

Both he and Shannon are former teachers. Trent taught physical science and coached football and track for two years after graduating from the University of Texas, where he played football.

His introduction to building came while working on a

framing crew with his brother-in-law during summer breaks. He loved the outdoor workplace, the sense of freedom and the camaraderie of being on the crew. Because teaching didn't pay enough after he and his wife started a family, he left the profession for insurance sales. "I loved working with the kids. I just couldn't make any money at it."

But after the experience of building his own home, he reoriented his career once again, working for Village Builders in Houston for several years to learn the business before striking out on his own. "I always knew that I wanted to work for myself," he stated.

"Building is like making a big 3-D puzzle. Reading the plans, breaking the project down into pieces, creating something from nothing. That all appealed to me."

What also appealed to Trent is the variety that comes in a typical work day. "Every day it's something different; there's always some kind of challenge. I like solving problems.

"I also like dealing with people. The biggest thing is communication. A lot of people aren't visual, so I spend

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Texas Builder Elected Chairman of NAHB



Granger MacDonald, a Kerrville, Texas-based builder and developer with 40 years of experience in the home building industry, was elected as the 2017 chairman of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) during the association's International Builders' Show in Orlando, Fla., in January.

MacDonald is chairman and CEO of the MacDonald Companies, a diverse development, construction and property management enterprise with nearly 50 neighborhoods completed and managed throughout Texas.

"We look forward to working with incoming the Trump administration and Democratic and Republican leaders in the new Congress to promote policies that will boost

homeownership and rental housing opportunities for all Americans," said MacDonald. "Specifically, we will seek to reform the regulatory process and ensure any tax reform efforts protect vital housing tax incentives that are needed to keep the economy moving forward.

"We will also urge Congress to enact comprehensive housing finance reform, with the federal government acting as a backstop in times of crisis, to protect the 30-year mortgage and bring the flow of private capital back into the marketplace."

MacDonald has been active in the NAHB leadership structure at the local, state and national levels throughout his career. A senior life director, he has served on the NAHB Board of Directors for more than 30 years and is

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a member of the NAHB Executive Board. He has also served as chairman on several influential NAHB committees and councils, including the Federal Government Affairs Committee, the State and Local Government Affairs Committee, the Housing Credit Group, the Multifamily Council and BUILD-PAC, the political action committee of NAHB.

MacDonald was elected president of the Texas Association of Builders in 2010 and is a member of the Hill Country Builders Association, the Greater San Antonio Builders Association and the Home Builders Association of San Angelo.

Actively involved in his community, he has had years of experience working with and serving on governmental commissions and boards. He served on the Kerrville/Kerr County Airport Board and the City of Austin Planning Commission. He was also chairman of the City of Austin Environmental Board and president of the Upper Guadalupe River Authority.

He and his wife, Kathy, reside in the Texas Hill Country. His partner in the MacDonald Companies is his son, T. Justin MacDonald, also a long-term member of NAHB

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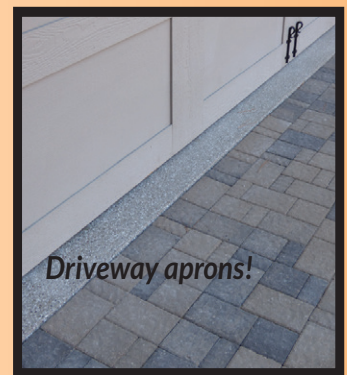
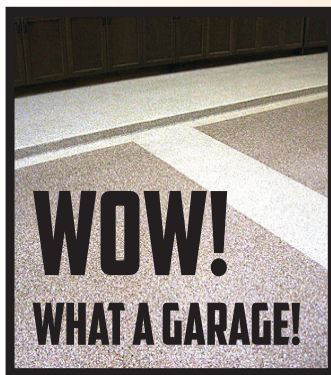
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DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

MELISSA SNOW, INTERIOR DESIGNER, IIDA

Photo by TK Images

Customer service and product quality have always been the top priorities at Lighting Inc. The second generation family-owned business' belief is that through hard work and dedication, it can be second to none when it comes to lighting options.

The staff members at Lighting, Inc. understand that the top design professionals in the Houston market are committed to creating individualized and functional designs to meet the lifestyles of their clients' families. That's why they diligently work with the area's top interior designers and design firms in order to assure their clients' gratification when it comes to realizing their dreams, reality and inspirations in making their house a home.

With more than 100 years of employee experience at Lighting Inc., the staff aspires to stand out in the industry by assisting designers to find the perfect lighting fixtures for their needs. Their passion for lighting, home décor and customer service has been the driving force behind their business since 1959 and are eager to serve.

This month Lighting Inc. speaks with Melissa Snow of Melissa Snow Designs, LLC. Melissa started her

company by wanting to bring a personal touch to an often cookie cutter process and by recognizing a need to make consistent, timeless designs attainable for those who seek the services of a qualified professional who will work with clients.

Because of her unique background and expertise, Melissa is able to execute original distinctive, yet timeless designs while also delivering solid, reliable service to her clients. She strives to bring her clients' visions into reality, while at the same time providing the highest level of quality in their design with the best return on their design investment.

Because all clients have a unique vision, Melissa Snow Designs embraces each project individually, providing fresh, innovative ideas and creative concepts for all project types regardless of the project size or budget. Melissa Snow Designs delivers a custom professional approach to meeting both commercial and residential interior design needs.

Lighting, Inc.: *What motivated you to go into the interior design field?*

Melissa Snow: *I enjoy the creative challenge of walking*



Photo by TK Images



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Photo by Builder Heavenly Homes, LLC

into the space with a client and having them describe to me what they want, and then we make it reality. I love several aspects of design – anything from the various finishes to selecting the perfect accessory for a client. I enjoy rethinking the space with a client, whether it is selecting a new piece or knocking down a wall to open up a space. I enjoy each challenge because it is unique. There're always new problems and new successes. We take on the challenge, and that's a lot of our motivation.

Lighting, Inc.: *How can an experienced interior designer help custom home builders or remodeling contractors with their building or remodeling projects?*

Melissa Snow: Definitely. We need to be on the same page. We attempt to create a functional design space that represents the beauty the client wants to see. Budgets are a top priority. We can assist them to suggest items to the client or builder that are within the budget allotted. Also, an interior designer can keep the project on track to meet the set deadlines for when the selections are necessary for the homebuilder or contractor.

Lighting, Inc.: *What sets you apart from other designers?*

Melissa Snow: Melissa Snow Designs is a customer service business. A key characteristic that sets good customer service apart is not just to hear but listen to what the client needs, wants and desires for their space. It is important to have a beautiful functioning space. I feel the client should have the final decision since they will be the one spending the most time in the space that is designed. The client truly leads the process in the way we approach each aspect. Our company is very flexible in the process when working with a client. The client may desire to work hand-in-hand with Melissa Snow Designs. The client may allow our company to select and then bring options to them to view. Sometimes we put a space together and show the client the final space completely designed. It is all up to the client.

Lighting, Inc.: *What has been your most challenging project and why?*

Melissa Snow: We designed a 20,000-square-foot restaurant project that was a historical property and truthfully that was the most challenging. As the design team conferred onsite daily about balancing what we could rehab compared to what we needed to replace – think mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural – and to keep it within the historical landmark guidelines took a lot of patience, and we acquired a lot of knowledge.

Continued from page 5

time explaining the changes and stages of their house through the construction process. It's only when we reach that sheetrock stage that most can get a true vision of their home." He likes to keep in very close contact with the homeowner during construction and prides himself in being on-site daily.

He said he encourages his homebuyers to come to the building site with him. He wants them to ask questions and talk about changes and the building process. He feels communication is key in helping the homeowner have a peace of mind so they can enjoy the excitement of

know their strengths and weaknesses. The guys I've stuck with for a long time are the guys that have done a good job for us. They know my expectations, and that helps for a smoother building process. They know I like a clean job site, which always makes our clients happy."

Reinhardt Homes also employs two workers who primarily do touch-up work.

Most of the homes he builds are on or around Lake Conroe, but it's getting a lot harder to find lots in that area, he said, because of population growth. The reputation of Montgomery County schools is drawing



watching their new home being built.

Elliott typically builds eight to 10 homes each year, which range in size from 1,500 to 9,000 sq. ft., although the typical size is 3,500 to 5,000 sq. ft., a size which takes six months or less to complete from the time the foundation is poured. That average house is priced at \$400,000 to \$700,000 and appeals to second- or third-time homebuyers.

He uses subcontractors that have proven themselves throughout the years, who are the best in their trade. "I





people to the area, as well as the appeal of the lake itself, which draws families as well as retirees.

“This area is growing so fast, with production builders coming in to Conroe and Montgomery. I’m starting to consider marketing and advertising for the first time because new folks coming in don’t know our reputation. I’m also considering building some spec homes for the first time. I want to get in front of the growth.”

The challenge of finding good lots has Elliott scouting for property to develop himself. “Bigger acreage lots are getting few and far between. Land is getting ‘way up there in price. Lots that cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 two years ago are now \$80,000 to \$90,000.”

But no matter how Reinhardt Homes evolves, the company will stay focused on building and delivering quality homes. After all, that’s not only the company’s motto, that’s its reputation.

.....
For more information, call Trent Elliott at 936-203-1529 or write info@reinhardthomes.com or visit www.reinhardthomes.com. The office is located at 15001 Walden Road, Suite 214A, Montgomery, TX 77356.



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As always the most challenging things in life and in design end up being the thing that brings us the most joy. We face challenges daily from items not being installed correctly to a paint color that needs to be tweaked a bit. In the end, how you handle your challenges tends to say worlds about you.

Lighting, Inc.: *What would be your recommendation for “what to do first” in a decorating project when working with the builders and/or homeowners?*

Melissa Snow: For the client or builder, visual references such as pictures are one of the best first steps. Think of a collage. You may not like everything in the pictures, but by bringing several pictures together, they end up having an overlapping continuity that can take a lot of the guesswork out of it.

Besides saving ideas and pictures of what the client would like the space to become, I would also suggest to take some time to educate yourself on some of the costs. For example view some granite slabs at a supplier to get a gauge for what the material costs per square foot of what the client might prefer. This also helps to know sometimes what we want just isn't in the budget.

Lighting, Inc.: *Any last thoughts, comments?*

Melissa Snow: The remodeling or building of a home is a large task. Take it day by day but be prepared to have the selections the builder or remodeler needs to make sure your project stays on track. Select an organized, creative and personable interior designer. Whoever you choose will hopefully listen to your desires and incorporates them into your space. It is good idea to have a key individual to lead you in your final selections so there aren't any costly mistakes.

For more information contact Melissa Snow, Interior Designer, IIDA, at Melissa Snow Designs by calling 281-639-0039 or emailing melissa@melissasnowdesigns.com or visiting www.melissasnowdesigns.com. You may also follow Melissa Snow Designs on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/melissasnowdesigns/> or Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/melissasnowdesigns/> or Pinterest at <https://www.pinterest.com/msnowtxdesigns>.



Photo by Builder Heavenly Homes, LLC



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Native Trails

Luxury Living with a Positive Impact

Nestled along California’s Central Coast in beautiful San Luis Obispo is Native Trails, an award-winning designer and manufacturer of eco-chic products for the kitchen and bath. Among its most notable products are its hand-hammered copper sinks and tubs and its sustainably-made concrete, NativeStone®, sinks and tubs.

Naomi Neilson Howard founded Native Trails as a college student with the dream of sharing the superior level of craftsmanship from artisans in Central Mexico with others that appreciate the artisan tradition and heritage. It’s a dream that continues to drive the company forward and why Native Trails partners with highly-skilled artisans in Vietnam, Mexico and the U.S. for each new offering. The commitment to innovative design, artisan partnerships and the use of premium materials remains at the forefront of Howard’s vision of well-crafted and well-designed products for the kitchen, bath and home.

Product History

Upon founding the company in 1996, Howard worked with artisans specializing in ceramic tile, folk art and



various types of metals to create designs that appealed to the American market. She enlisted highly skilled coppersmiths to marry their centuries-old artisan techniques with contemporary design, resulting in the first copper sink prototypes made of 100 percent recycled copper, which quickly became Native Trails' core product.

This focus led to Native Trails becoming the first company to have its copper sinks certified by the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) and listed by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), where it helped write the copper basin standards.

Native Trails created its first handcrafted bath vanities to complement and showcase its copper basins in 2005. Since then, the company expanded its product line to include more award-winning bath furniture collections, mirrors and accessories using sustainable materials such as reclaimed and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified wood.

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In recent years, the company unveiled its NativeStone® Collection, a new line of sustainably made concrete sinks and tubs, as well as coordinating luxury lifestyle accessories. Pioneered by Native Trails, NativeStone is a groundbreaking blend of cement and jute fiber that weighs approximately 40 percent less than standard concrete and is incredibly stain and scratch resistant, making it a favorite among homeowners.

Native Trails ushers in 2017 with the promotion of several new lines, including its dining and conference room tables, its Writing Desk Collection, and a series of new high-shine finishes for its copper products: Polished Copper and Polished Nickel. Further differentiating Native Trails' leading capabilities in copper, is the introduction of MetalProtect™, a revolutionary product offering unparalleled protection to all finishes of copper and nickel sinks and bathtubs.

Native Trails ships its award-winning products to more than 1,300 showrooms across the U.S. and Canada, including Morrison Supply Company in Houston.

Visit www.nativetrails.net to learn more.



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Miele space-saving appliances avoid compromising quality for size

Miele, the largest family-owned luxury appliance manufacturer in the world, partnered with the Neolith Tiny House, debuting at KBIS 2017, to showcase its smaller-sized appliances in a functional setting.

glasses will be cleaned gently, ensuring long-lasting sparkle for every occasion. With enough space to accommodate up to nine place settings, this dishwasher

Continued on page 19

For many years, the standard dream kitchen in the United States has been defined as an expansive showplace occupied by shiny, professional-sized appliances. However, with the emergence of the tiny home trend, American kitchen ideals are being redefined. The luxury, quality and performance that Miele products have gained in popularity for large family-style kitchens are now ready to be experienced through Miele's smaller cooking appliances, dishwashers and refrigeration.

Miele's 24" Combi-Steam Oven, capable of both steam and convection cooking, integrates into any kitchen or lifestyle, big or small. Offering genuine gourmet cooking techniques, Miele's MasterChef Gourmet programs automatically set temperatures and cooking durations for even the most complicated dishes. Reminiscent of smart phones and tablets, the M Touch touchscreen control panel is an intuitive user interface that allows the user to swipe or scroll through the menu with the tip of a finger.

Limited kitchen space is maximized with Miele's 18" Futura Dimension Slimline Dishwasher. This elegant and feature-rich dishwasher is Energy Star®-rated and provides dishware with exceptional care and cleanliness. The Perfect GlassCare feature guarantees that delicate



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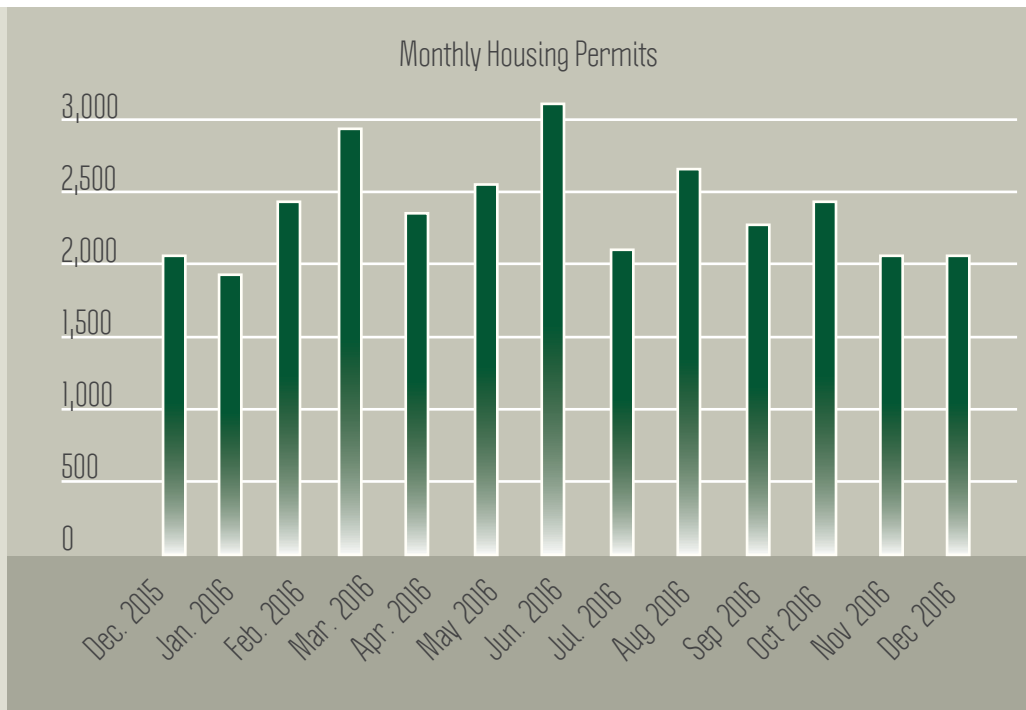


Houston Housing Picture

Bohlke Consulting Group, LLC

Monthly housing permits filed by builders in the Houston Area.

Dec 2015	2,098
Jan 2016	1,953
Feb 2016	2,428
Mar 2016	2,925
Apr 2016	2,367
May 2016	2,592
June 2016	3,112
July 2016	2,107
Aug 2016	2,674
Sep 2016	2,319
Oct 2016	2,463
Nov 2016	2,058
Dec 2016	2,048
Dec 15 v. Dec 16	-2.4%



MARKET	2015	2016	ANNUAL % CHANGE	-	-
Grand Total	31,936	29,046	-9.0%	-	-
Lennar Homes	1,786	1,665	-6.8%	-	-
DR Horton Homes	1,547	1,435	-7.2%	-	-
Perry Homes	1,412	1,299	-8.0%	-	-
Postwood/Long Lk	1,211	1,169	-3.5%	-	-
KB Homes	954	955	0.1%	-	-
Meritage Homes	915	768	-16.1%	-	-
Express Homes	892	759	-14.9%	-	-
David Weekley	661	753	-13.9%	-	-
Beazer Himes	811	680	-16.2%	-	-
LGI Homes	831	667	-19.9%	-	-
	-	-		-	-

Monthly permit activity shows a 2.4% decrease between December 2015 and December 2016. Annual permit numbers report a 9% decrease for the Houston market area for 2016. Two of the top ten builders reported positive growth in 2016.

Continued from page 17

will make entertaining cleanup a breeze.

24" Fully Integrated MasterCool™ Wine Storage Store wine in style with Miele's 24" Fully Integrated MasterCool Wine Storage unit. With ample space for up to 102 bottles, the finest reds, whites, rosés and sparkling wines can be stored in three separate cooling zones, ensuring each bottle is kept at the perfect temperature. Miele also has two elegantly designed under-counter wine units that are perfect for any kitchen or entertaining space.

The Miele 24" Induction Cooktop offers the best in induction cooking technology combined with modern design configuration. The many beneficial features, such as its precise PowerFlex cooking zone and EasyClean Ceran Surface, provide any small kitchen with a versatile, multi-faceted culinary contraption. Notably, Miele's exclusive Con@ctivity 2.0 feature allows the cooktop to communicate with a Miele ventilation hood for optimal function.

The M Touch Built-in Coffee System quickly becomes the centerpiece of any kitchen space. Its many coffee drink capabilities, clear and concise touchscreen controls and exceptional performance take a morning or afternoon coffee break to a whole new level of enjoyment. Experiencing the signature Miele built-in coffee system (found in some of the world's most beautiful homes) may ignite all five senses!

The 24" Warming Drawer is a kitchen essential for those who love to savor warm and delicious flavors, even hours after a meal has been prepared. Commonly used for keeping plates and cups warm, the smaller-sized, easy-to-use warming drawer becomes a dinner party's biggest hit.

Any room in the house can use the 24" PerfectCool Bottom Mount refrigerator. Its succinct temperature controls and practical space optimization make this unit perfect for storing perishables or keeping beverages cool. Details such as FlexiLight shelf-mounted LED lighting and NoFrost technology, found in the freezer units, truly differentiate this small-scale refrigerator from its competition.

To learn more, visit www.mieleusa.com, www.facebook.com/mieleus, www.youtube.com/mieleus and or follow Miele on Instagram @MieleUSA.



Trey Magee
South Texas Brick & Stone, LLC

cell (713) 299-8893
office (281) 759-3100
fax (281) 759-3101
tmagee8@comcast.net

14110 Katy Freeway
Houston, Texas 77079-1032
Showroom 8715 A Katy Freeway

www.SouthTexasBrick.com



12902 Mula Lane
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Panelists Forecast Economy at GHBA Luncheon



Builders Post-Tension

This past year was a roller coaster year for the homebuilding industry, as builders and remodelers faced labor shortages, tanking oil prices, energy-sector job losses and an uncertain national political climate. At the annual Greater Houston Builders Association's Forecast Luncheon on Jan. 18 at the new Marriott Marquis, three top economists addressed those issues and more, sharing hard numbers and data, along with their predictions for the homebuilding industry in 2017.

More than 900 GHBA members registered for this special panel presentation, with Eddie Martin, Tilson Home Corporation, acting as the moderator. Panelists included Robert Jankowski, senior vice president, research and regional economist with the Greater Houston Partnership; Scott Davis, senior vice president, advisory with Meyers Research; and Elizabeth Simas, assistant professor of political science, University of Houston.

The panelists noted that during the years 2014-2016 the City of Houston lost 88,700 jobs, either in the energy business or dependent to the energy business. But also during the years 2014-2016 the City of Houston gained 77,400 jobs in non-energy related businesses.

They concurred that Houston's oil business woes are now in the rear view mirror with current oil prices are around \$50/ bbl., up from a low of \$26/bbl. The current rig count is up to 655 from a low of around 400.

Oil prices positioned between \$48-\$85/bbl. is the most conducive to optimal single family home building growth. At those prices it is not too high to hurt your pocket book but high enough for energy companies to be busy and creating jobs, they said.

They also noted that Houston is once again creating jobs, and the long-term trend is on an upswing. Houston is forecasted to create 30,000 jobs in 2017, up from 15,000 in 2015.

Single family building permits will likely be flat in 2017,

although still robust at more than 30,000 starts, and will see some nice growth in single family permits in 2018.

Existing home sales had a record year in Houston in 2016. Average home prices have fallen back down to 2015 levels, which makes them affordable.

Builders will need to keep a close eye on rising mortgage percentage rates, which are always a threat to affordability.

Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) are extremely important to the affordability of housing in Texas. Not building in a MUD can add as much as \$ 150,000 to the price of a home.

The new Trump Administration has several stated goals as Mr. Trump is sworn in as the 45th President. He wants to revise and simplify the U.S. tax code, which should create more disposable income and spurring our economy. He wants to spend \$550 billion on U.S. infrastructure, which should create jobs and disposable income and spur our economy. He wants to decrease building regulations, which should reduce the cost and time it takes to build a house and increase affordability for homeowners. He wants to overhaul the immigration system. Houston is already currently experiencing a labor shortage; depending on how immigration policy is shaped, it could help or hurt local labor issues.

Finally, the panelists recommend to stay calm and profit on!

GREG TOMLINSON PRESIDENT OF BUILDERS POST TENSION, INC.



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